

Cavendish School

Lady Gomm House, 58 Hawkstone Road, Southwark Park, London, SE16 2PA

Inspection dates	4–6 December 2013	
Overall effectiveness	Good	2
Pupils' achievement	Good	2
Pupils' behaviour and personal development	Good	2
Quality of teaching	Good	2
Quality of curriculum	Good	2
Pupils' welfare, health and safety	Outstanding	1
Leadership and management	Good	2

Summary of key findings

This school is good because

- Programmes of work meet individual needs well and enable students to re-engage with learning after considerable periods of disrupted education prior to joining the school.
- The excellent and consistently applied behaviour policy helps students who enter the school with extremely challenging behaviour to develop much more positive attitudes over time.
- Teachers, most of whom have been at the school for some time, have high expectations and are committed to helping the students to learn and to fulfil their potential.
- There is an expectation that students will gain external accreditation and go on to further education or work. Good support means that none leaves at the end of Year 11 without a clear future pathway to follow.
- The extremely effective arrangements for the welfare, health and safety of students enable them to feel safe and very well supported when they are at school. They are helped to develop much better and more positive attitudes about themselves and other people.
- School leaders provide good support to staff so that the good teaching enables students to achieve well.

It is not yet outstanding because

- The curriculum does not provide sufficient opportunities for students to participate more actively in creative pursuits such as music, drama and design and technology.
- There are limited opportunities for linking with similar schools to share expertise and opportunities for staff development and training with others in the same field.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school meets schedule 1 of The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, as amended by The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2012 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection was undertaken with 24 hours' notice. Six lessons were observed, meaning that all six teachers were seen, and students' work was examined.
- Discussions were held with the proprietor, headteacher, staff, students, a representative from a placing local authority, a former student who is now a volunteer at the school and the school's police liaison officer.
- Written evidence was scrutinised, including evidence of the progress being made by students, marking, schemes of work, lesson planning, and individual education and learning plans of students, as well as key policies and procedures.
- The views of staff, students, parents, carers and associated professionals were taken into account.

Inspection team

Martyn Groucutt, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Cavendish School was first established in 2000 in the London Borough of Southwark as a coeducational school for students between the ages of 11 and 16 years who have behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. The school is registered to take up to 48 students and there are 27 currently on roll, and all except one have a statement of special educational needs.
- Many students have additional and complex needs, including autistic spectrum disorders and attention deficit hyperactivity syndrome.
- Students have experienced a seriously disrupted previous education. Some had been out of full-time education for a time prior to joining the school.
- The ethnic origins of students reflect the wide diversity found in the London boroughs from which they come, although over time very few have been learning English as an additional language.
- The school makes use of the expertise of alternative providers such as local further education colleges.
- The school aims to provide a safe and secure environment in which students can re-engage with learning and adopt positive social attitudes.
- The last inspection of the school was in November 2010.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Expand opportunities for students to participate more actively in creative areas such as music, drama and design and technology.
- Establish links with other similar schools in order to:
 - promote the professional development and enhanced expertise of staff
 - develop opportunities for peer observation and support for developing best practice
 - look together at an increased amount of students' work from across the whole spectrum of academic ability, to increase staff confidence in coming to secure judgements about the level and standard of students' work
 - create professional networks and a forum for promoting expertise in the education of students who display very challenging behaviour.

Inspection judgements

Pupils' achievement

Good

Achievement is good because students become re-engaged in learning through good teaching and an effective curriculum which covers the required range of learning experiences. The school meets the needs of its students and supports them well in moving to the next phase in their lives. Testing on entry establishes current levels of attainment and shows students performing at levels far below those generally found for their age. They quickly start to make strong and sometimes outstanding progress. By the time they leave at the end of Year 11 there is an expectation that they will gain external qualifications and while a few enter the world of work, the majority remain in education. Accreditation currently consists of Entry Level and GCSE.

Provision meets individual need through carefully devised individual behaviour and education plans, reviewed termly to ensure they remain relevant and contain challenging targets for improvement. Progress is tracked carefully for every student and for identified groups through detailed assessments undertaken in November and June. This shows that currently the standards in English are a little below those found in mathematics, where students make particularly strong progress, so overall achievement is not yet outstanding. The care that goes into meeting individual needs leads to mixed-age groups in which students of similar temperaments and needs are grouped together to support their learning, and reflects the strong commitment to providing equality of opportunity for all. As well as tracking individual progress, evidence shows that there is no difference in outcomes for different groups, with all doing equally well.

There is a focus on delivering the National Curriculum, modified to meet individual needs, with a clear focus on English and mathematics. The best teaching lets students know the level at which they are working and what needs to be done to move up to the next level.

Pupils' behaviour and personal development

Good

Behaviour and personal development are good and are strongly supported by a very effective scheme for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Over time they are given effective support in becoming much more positive in their self-confidence, self-esteem and self-knowledge. This is an important element in helping them to moderate and take responsibility for their own behaviour. Attitudes and relationships become much more positive and a majority start to attend school much more regularly. However, for some, attendance and punctuality do remain issues. The school works hard to address this concern, working closely with education welfare services and parents and carers, and over the last five years this has resulted in a solid rise in attendance even though overall it is not yet outstanding.

Effective lessons in personal, social and health education include a focus on becoming a positive member of the community, promoting an understanding of different faiths and cultures, and helping students respect themselves and others. A strong contribution to ideas such as the rule of law and rights of the individual are effectively supported through the strong links the school has with its community liaison police officer who visits weekly and has a positive relationship with the students. Leaders ensure that when controversial and political issues are considered, that steps have been taken to offer a balanced presentation of opposing views.

Local authorities place students here because they appreciate that its small size enables the school to focus on meeting individual needs, which are sometimes quite severe, and enable students to be successful. There is a belief that the expertise displayed by staff at Cavendish enables them to be successful in supporting and educating very challenging students where others have failed, with which the inspector concurs. It is a measure of the success of the school that some former students return to act as volunteers, supporting the current generation.

Quality of teaching**Good**

The quality of teaching is good and much is outstanding. Teachers have high expectations and a belief that students can overcome the difficulties they have faced. As a consequence, students achieve well and begin to develop a greater faith in their own abilities and a belief that they can be successful. From initial baselines on entry, teachers get a clear picture of individual ability. Challenging targets for improving behaviour and learning reflect high expectations. Teachers and learning support assistants work together effectively to support the individualised learning that re-engages students. This enables them to experience success and make rapid progress from their very low starting points. Challenging targets are set following twice-yearly assessments that cover all areas of learning, including English and mathematics, and show the progress that has been made. The process ensures that individual education plans remain focused on raising achievement, enabling some students to gain high grades at GCSE but also supporting each individual irrespective of their overall ability. Classrooms are well equipped in supporting student progress and in creating good learning environments. Computers are used as an effective learning tool for individual research. Detailed lesson planning makes lesson objectives clear, although the expected outcomes for individual students are not always set out so clearly.

In the best lessons, teachers have high expectations, and effective questioning enables students to develop their ideas and to express themselves. However, sometimes teaching in such a small school does not help teachers to develop a wider picture of the attainment of young people in secondary schools, or to know what work at a specific standard or level actually looks like. Work is marked effectively and enables teachers to give specific advice on how it might be improved further, often done in individual discussions. In lessons, staff are very effective in helping students feel positive about themselves and the efforts they are making, helping them develop much stronger self-belief in their abilities. Discussions between the school and students' families, and where appropriate with other professionals, enables the school to gain a picture of the wider social and emotional needs of those who join the school and to address them effectively.

Quality of curriculum**Good**

The curriculum is good overall and is effective because it is individualised to meet the needs of each student, helping them learn and achieve well. There are many opportunities to develop skills in speaking, listening, literacy and numeracy. The need to help students to develop their skills in English and mathematics is central to the curriculum. The school helps students to fill the many gaps in understanding that have come about as a result of their previously fragmented education. However, there is also an appreciation of the need to develop the social and emotional skills of students which is a particular focus of the effective personal, social and health education element of the curriculum. All the required areas of learning are covered, including creative elements in which art is a particular strength that helps many students come to terms with their feelings and emotions through art therapy.

Opportunities for trips and visits also enrich the curriculum and make learning more enjoyable, including links with local colleges where students can follow courses that the school cannot provide. However, while the curriculum covers creative elements such as music, drama and design and technology the school accepts that there is room to develop a more 'hands-on' approach to such learning and to see this reflected in opportunities for accreditation of a practical nature, such as those offered by BTEC awards. Physical education is promoted well, supporting healthy lifestyles. Good use is made of the adjacent park and a scheme to build and maintain bikes, then using them to benefit from the park's facilities, is very popular with students. Students benefit from specialist careers advice provided by the local authority which offers a good example of the positive collaboration that exists between the authority and the school.

Wider learning is supported by a range of professionals who support the school, including speech and language therapy and the work of educational psychologists. Liaison takes place between the

school and any external agency with which a student is in contact to ensure an integrated package of care and support is in place.

Pupils' welfare, health and safety

Outstanding

Provision for welfare, health and safety, including arrangements for safeguarding, are outstanding. All of the regulations for this standard are met and the necessary enhanced checks are made before anyone takes up employment. Arrangements are strengthened by positive links with a range of outside organisations including the children's services departments and family intervention services. Tutors work closely with parents, carers and local authorities to ensure that students are well supported and their needs are met. The needs of students are paramount and the school seeks to ensure that there is highly effective integrated support from all agencies who are concerned with students.

Recruitment procedures are robust, details of all appointments being maintained in an effective single central register, as required. All staff are very well informed about child protection arrangements and are trained to the required level. There is a focus on making the school a safe environment where students are confident that they will be able to learn in a comfortable and relaxed atmosphere. They form extremely positive relationships with staff, who all act as very positive role models.

All the required policies are firmly in place and reviewed regularly, including those for health and safety, dealing with and preventing bullying, discipline, first aid, recruitment and child-protection. They are well written, easily understood and implemented effectively. Where appropriate they are understood by students. For example, the behaviour policy, which is clearly based around rewards and sanctions, is understood by all and has a high level of student support. There have been no permanent exclusions and few fixed-term exclusions. Students are well aware of the different types of bullying and why all are unacceptable. The premises are maintained in good condition and risk-assessments are effective in ensuring a safe environment. Good attention is given to fire safety, including regular checks on all fire safety equipment.

Leadership and management

Good

The quality of leadership and management is good, with the proprietor and the headteacher sharing a common vision based around meeting the needs of very challenging students while providing good value for money. Leaders ensure that all the independent school standards are met and that students can achieve well. Staff are supported well, helping them meet not only the academic learning needs of students but also their wider social and emotional needs. Arrangements for the development and training of staff are a priority. However, being such a small school it is difficult to provide: regular internal opportunities for training; observing best practice and; access to a wide range of students' work covering the whole academic spectrum to give teachers greater confidence in the accuracy of their assessments and levelling of students' work. There are clear procedures for the monitoring of teaching and for managing the performance of staff. These link closely with the training and development opportunities that meet the needs of individuals and of the school itself. The school has a good understanding of its own strengths and areas for development.

At times small student numbers have limited the ability of leaders to provide the widest possible curriculum, although current projections for student numbers are more hopeful as local authorities appreciate the quality of the provision for students they place at the school. More than one has carried out their own inspections of provision and come to very positive conclusions. Finances and administration, including ensuring that all health and safety requirements are met in full, are effectively managed by the proprietor with assistance from the human resources manager. Consideration is given to maximising the accessibility of the building, but the nature of the Victorian building several stories high limits what is possible but the premises remain a safe and

suitable environment for learning.

All the necessary information is made available to parents, carers and others. This includes details of the suitable complaints procedure, although no complaints have been made during the last full calendar year. Arrangements for students who are taken ill, including the maintenance of first-aid boxes, are appropriate.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	A school which provides an exceptional quality of education and significantly exceeds minimum requirements.
Grade 2	Good	A school which provides a high quality of education that exceeds minimum requirements.
Grade 3	Adequate	A school which meets minimum requirements but needs to improve the quality of education it provides.
Grade 4	Inadequate	A school where minimum requirements are not met and/or the quality of education has serious weaknesses.

School details

Unique reference number	131237
Inspection number	422720
DfE registration number	210/6391

This inspection was carried out under section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Type of school	Special school for students with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties
School status	Independent school
Age range of pupils	11–16 years
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	27
Number of part time pupils	2
Proprietor	Cheryl Stepton
Headteacher	Sara Craggs
Date of previous school inspection	November 2010
Annual fees (day pupils)	£25,500
Telephone number	020 7394 0088
Fax number	020 7394 0088
Email address	info@cavendish-school.net

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